Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any discussion were held with the President of Portugal during his recent visit to India regarding the trade prospects between the two countries;

(b) if so, the details and the outcome thereof; and

(c) the extent to which the trade relations between the two countries are likely to be improved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Discussions held on the occasion of the visit of the prtuguese President, referred to the possibilities of establishment of joint ventures in Europe and Africa, using Portugal as an entry point for the European Common Market and tapping the potential of the Indian Community in Portugal in furthering trade and economic ties between the two countries.

A collaboration agreement between the federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (F.I.C.C.I.) and the Foreign Trade Institute of Portugal was also signed which would facilitate exchange of commercial economic and technical information for enhancing trade between the two countries.

[*English*]

Export of Wheat and Sugar

2946. SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity and value of wheat and sugar exported during the last six months;

(b) the companies which exported the wheat and sugar and the quantum exported by each;

(c) whether the exports were made against payment or barter system; and

(d) the details thereof in each case?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) and (b). Indian Sugar and General Industry Export Import Corporation exported sugar, and MMTC and STC exported wheat, on payment basis. As per details furnished by them, the export during 1991-92 of wheat and sugar are given below:-

Wheat: Qty:	672019tonnes.
Value:	Rs. 178.44 crores
(upto 20.2.92)	
Sugar: Qty:	4.492 lakh tonnes
(upto 21.2.92)	
Value:	Rs. 323.15 crores.

Production of Cotton

2947. SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the production of cotton and cotton yarn during the last three years, year wise;

(b) whether the farmers are getting remunerative prices for cotton;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) steps proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) A statement is attached.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d). Does not arise.

STATEMENT

(a) Details of production of cotton and cotton yarn during the last 3 years are as follows:-

Year	*Production of cotton according to cotton Advisory Board's estimates (in lakh bales)*	*Production of cotton yarn (in million Kgs.)*
1988-89	106	1302
1989-90	133.50	1367
1990-91	117	1467

Note: The Production figures for cotton are cotton year-wise (1st September to 31st August).

Economic Development of Rural Areas

2948. SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK:Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Regional Rural Banks functioning at present in each State, district-wise; and

(b) the role played by these banks in the economic development of rural areas in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) The details regarding the number of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) functioning in the country State-wise, and the districts covered by them as at the end of March, 1991 are given in the attached Statement.

(b) The RRBs have played an important role in achieving the objective of providing access to institutional credit to the weaker sections of the society. The credit support provided by these banks amounted to Rs. 3535 crores in 171 lakh accounts as on March, 1991. Further as of March, 1991 deposits amounting to Rs. 4979 crores were mobilised by RRBs in 334 lakh accounts. By their presence and operation in the rural areas, RRBs have helped in the development of such areas as also economic upliftment of its clientele.